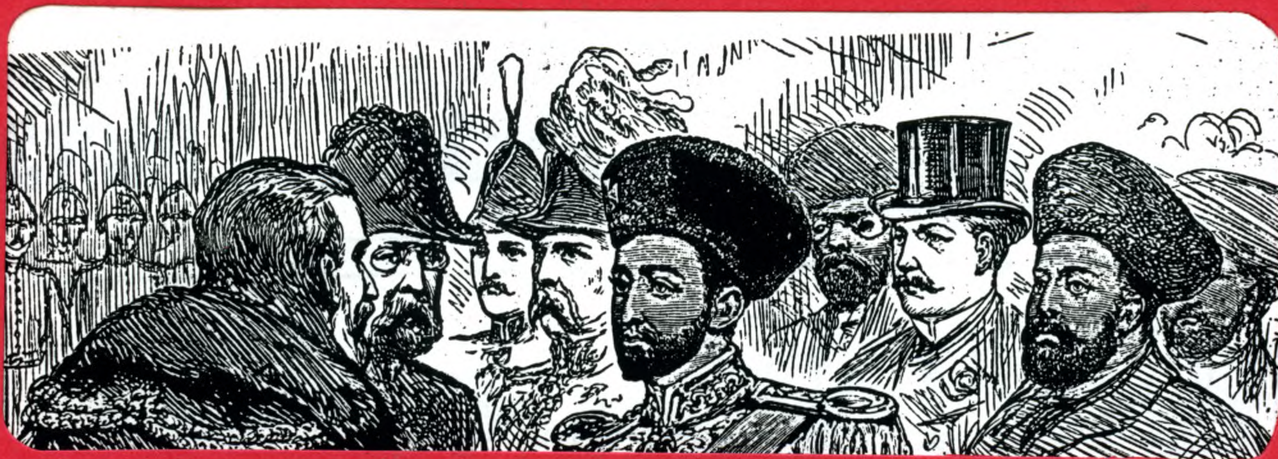
AFGHANISTAN FORUM





MISSION OF AN AFGHAN PRINCE TO LONDON

NASRULLAH KHAN'S VISIT TO BRITAIN AS REFLECTED IN THE PRESS

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PORTSMOUTH'S WELCOME TO THE SHAHZADA NASRULLAH KHAN, SECOND SON OF THE AMEER OF AFGHANISTAN.

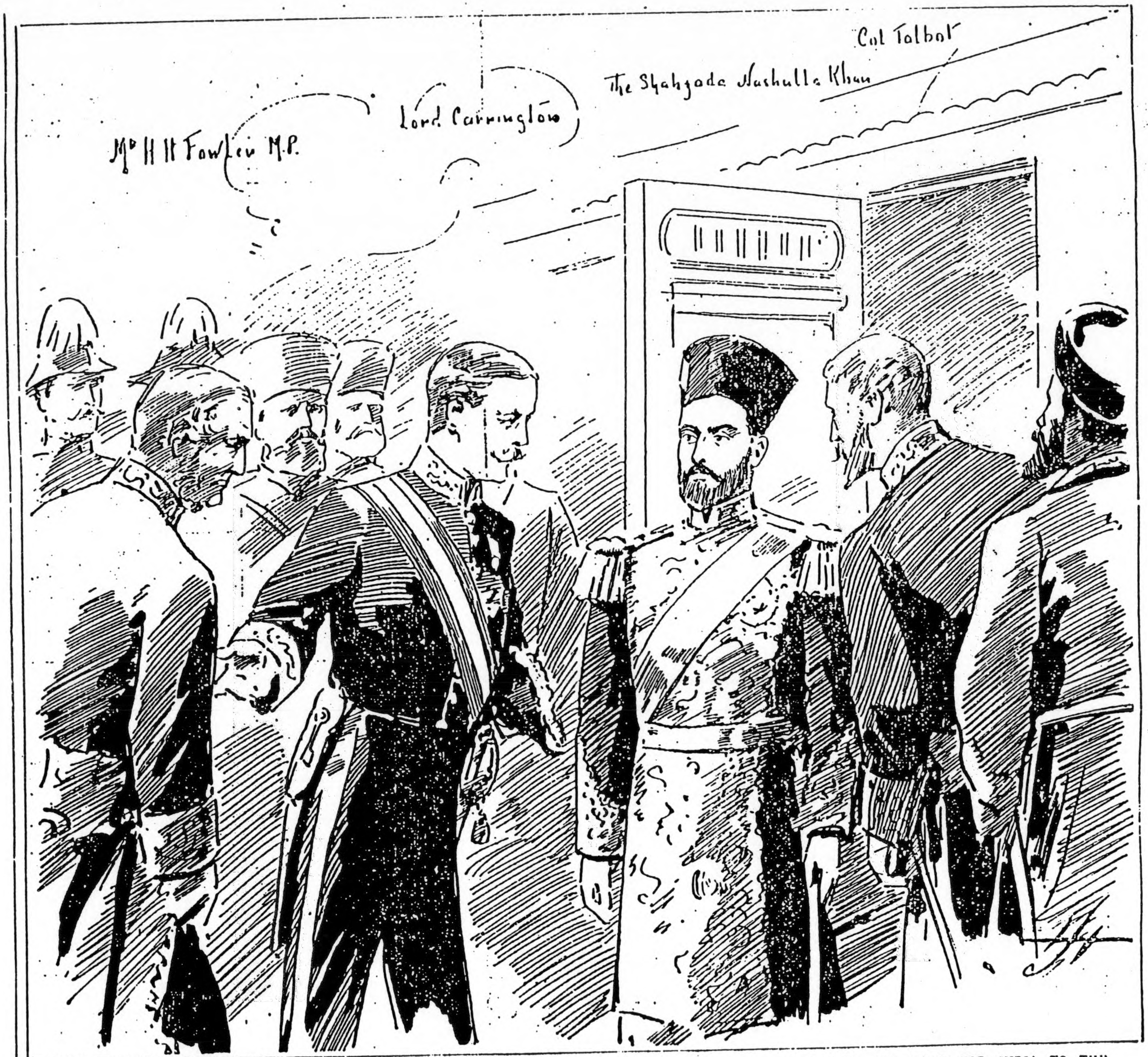
SARDAR NASRULLAH KHAN'S VISIT TO BRITAIN AS REFLECTED IN THE BRITISH PRESS.

Upon his assumption to the throne in 1880, Amir Abdur Rahman (1880-1901) concluded a cautious alliance with Great Britain in which the British government promised to protect Afghanistan from unprovoked Russian aggression provided the Afghan ruler conducted his foreign relations through the agency of Britain. The Amir received a yearly subsidy of 1,800,000 rupees to consolidate his power and to strengthen his defenses against Russia. He considered this an alliance between equals for their common defense, whereas the British government tended to regard Afghanistan as a quasi protectorate.

Abdur Rahman had political agents at the viceroy's court and in several Indian cities, and a Muslim Indian agent represented Britain in Kabul. But apart from ceremonial correspondence with London, the Afghan ruler had to deal with the viceroy of India instead of the London government. This the Amir found eminently undesirable, because it reinforced the idea that he was a vassal of the British empire. [1]

Following the conclusion of the Durand Agreement in November 1893, which defined the boundary between Afghanistan and British India, Lord Elgin, the viceroy of India, invited Amir Abdur Rahman to visit India and England. The Amir was willing to go but wanted to be assured of a welcome compatible with the "dignity and prestige of the Afghan Sovereign." [2] He was about fifty years old at the time and suffered from gout and felt unable to travel. His first son, Habibullah, his designated successor, was required in Kabul; therefore, he decided to send his second son, Sardar Nasrullah. His objective was to win Queen Victoria's agreement to establish an Afghan embassy in London. In this Nasrullah's mission failed and the Amir was bitterly disappointed. He complained that "It is the custom, not only among the aristocracy, but among our poorest people as well, that a guest should never return in despair at his request being refused, even if he be an enemy .... But my son, who was the son of a sovereign and the guest of another sovereign, was returned with a dry but polite refusal to my request." [3] For Sardar Nasrullah this was a personal defeat.

This article attempts to illustrate Afghan and British attitudes: the assumption of the Afghan ruler that laws of hospitality would influence British government policies and that Queen Victoria had the authority to act on the Amir's request. It also reveals British cultural and racial



THE ARRIVAL OF THE SHAHZADA IN LONDON: THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN INTRODUCING THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA TO THE PRINCE AT VICTORIA STATION.

The Daily Graphic, May 25, 1895.

stereotypes regarding the "Oriental Mind" and the best manner to influence it. This article, furthermore, tells the story of the first diplomatic mission to Britain of an Afghan emissary.

The visit began auspiciously: The press was friendly and gave a royal welcome to the Afghan Prince whose people had thwarted British attempts at imperial conquest in two Anglo-Afghan wars. The Globe reminded its readers that "Afghanistan has, until recently, had but little reason to be grateful to England. It has been the scene of some of our most disastrous blunders, and for those blunders the Afghans have suffered even more bitterly than we." It declared the Sardar's visit "an incident of historic importance, representing ... the fruition of those close and eminently friendly relations between England and Afghanistan which our interesting visitor's father has striven so hard to nourish." [4] Another paper suggested that if Nasrullah's visit should confirm the Amir that "his best friends are to be found at Calcutta, and not at St. Petersburg, it will be well for Afghanistan as well as for India." [5]

The Sardar was expected to visit the chief industrial and manufacturing centers of Britain which, it was hoped, would lead to purchases for the Amir's projects of development. And it was assumed that the Amir's engineer-in-chief, Sir Salter Pyne, and his commercial agent in India, Mr. T.A. Martin, had accompanied the Shahzada (Prince) to England for this purpose.

The Sardar traveled on the Indian government steamer "Clive" from Bombay and landed on May 24, 1895 at 5:00 p.m. at Spithead, near Portsmouth, to a royal reception. The H.M.S. Gibraltar fired a salute of 21 guns and Sir Gerald Seymour Fitzgerald, the Political Aide de Camp to the India Office, boarded the "Clive" to discuss the arrangements for the reception.[6] Upon landing at the dockyard, the Sardar was received by a guard of honor of the Royal Marine Light Infantry and the chief dignitaries, including the Admiral Sir Novell Salmon, commander in chief; Gen. Davis, commanding the Southern District, the senior naval and military officers of the Port and Garrison, and the Mayor and Corporation of Portsmouth. The Shahzada's retinue wore "frockcoats" and other European garments, except for their many-colored head dresses.

The Afghan visitors went by special train to Victoria Station where Lord Carrington, the Lord Chamberlain, received them on behalf of the Queen. Also present were H. H. Fowler, the Secretary of State for India, and George Curzon, the subsequent viceroy of India and British foreign

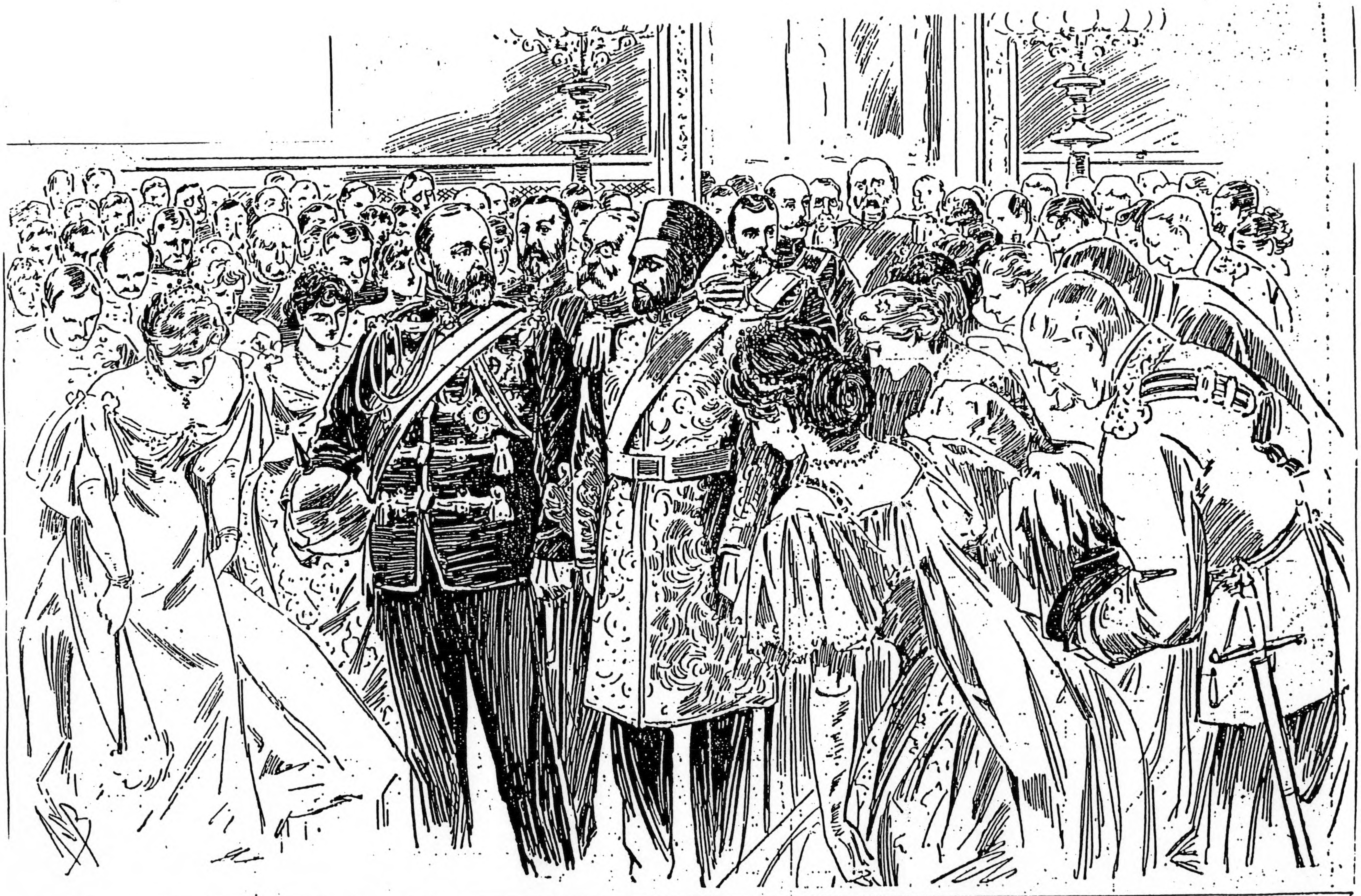
secretary. Prince Nasrullah Khan, although of average height, looked short, surrounded as he was by the staff in attendance. "He wore a dark blue frock coat, richly embroidered with gold lilies, and heavy epaulets; on his head was an Astrachan hat, and the decoration he wore was the Star of India. By his side he wore a gold handled sword, on which he left his hand during the ceremony."[7]

The 23 year old Sardar was described as of a "decidedly Eastern type of physiognomy, of medium height, and slender built... wearing a slight mustache and close-cropped beard, and, though not very fair, ... of a handsome appearance. [With] a face of much earnestness, sincerity, and power and well-defined features, bespeaking great strength of will and expression." The corespondent added that "If he wore full English uniform he would easily pass as an Englishman." [8] The Shahzada was said to have confided to Mr. Martin "that he desired to be as an Englishman in everything except his religion." [9]

The <u>Chronicle</u> pointed to the importance of the visitor, "the lion of this year's London season," who represented an important ally and hoped that he would be suitably impressed by what he sees in Britain. It added, "We fear that he can hardly be much struck with ... our power at sea, for he is aware that, whatever may be the strength of our navy, ironclads can never find their way to Cabul." The journal considered Nasrullah's visit even more important than the visits of "the successor of Cyrus and Darius" (Nasruddin Shah of Persia), because Afghanistan was the "only territory interposing between the Russian outposts on the Oxus and the banks of the Indus." [10]

The Sardar and his retinue were quartered in the Dorchester House which was rented for six weeks at the cost of £2,000. The British government set aside the amount of £50,000 for the entertainment of the Afghan guests. It was estimated that the Shahzada had brought presents to the value of two lakh rupees (£20,000) and "according to Eastern etiquette, had to receive presents to the exact equivalent." However, "the exchanges of munificence did not have to balance to an anna" because the gifts were personal offerings to the Queen, members of the royal family, and other illustrious personages" rather than the British government. [11]

The Afghan Prince was quickly thrown into a whirl of social functions. He had hardly landed in Portsmouth when he and his suite were driven to Southsea-Common to witness the Queen's birthday parade at which 6,000 soldiers and sailors participated. [12] A state ball followed at



THE STATE BALL AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE: THE ROYAL PROCESSION ENTERING THE BALLROOM. (See page 4.)

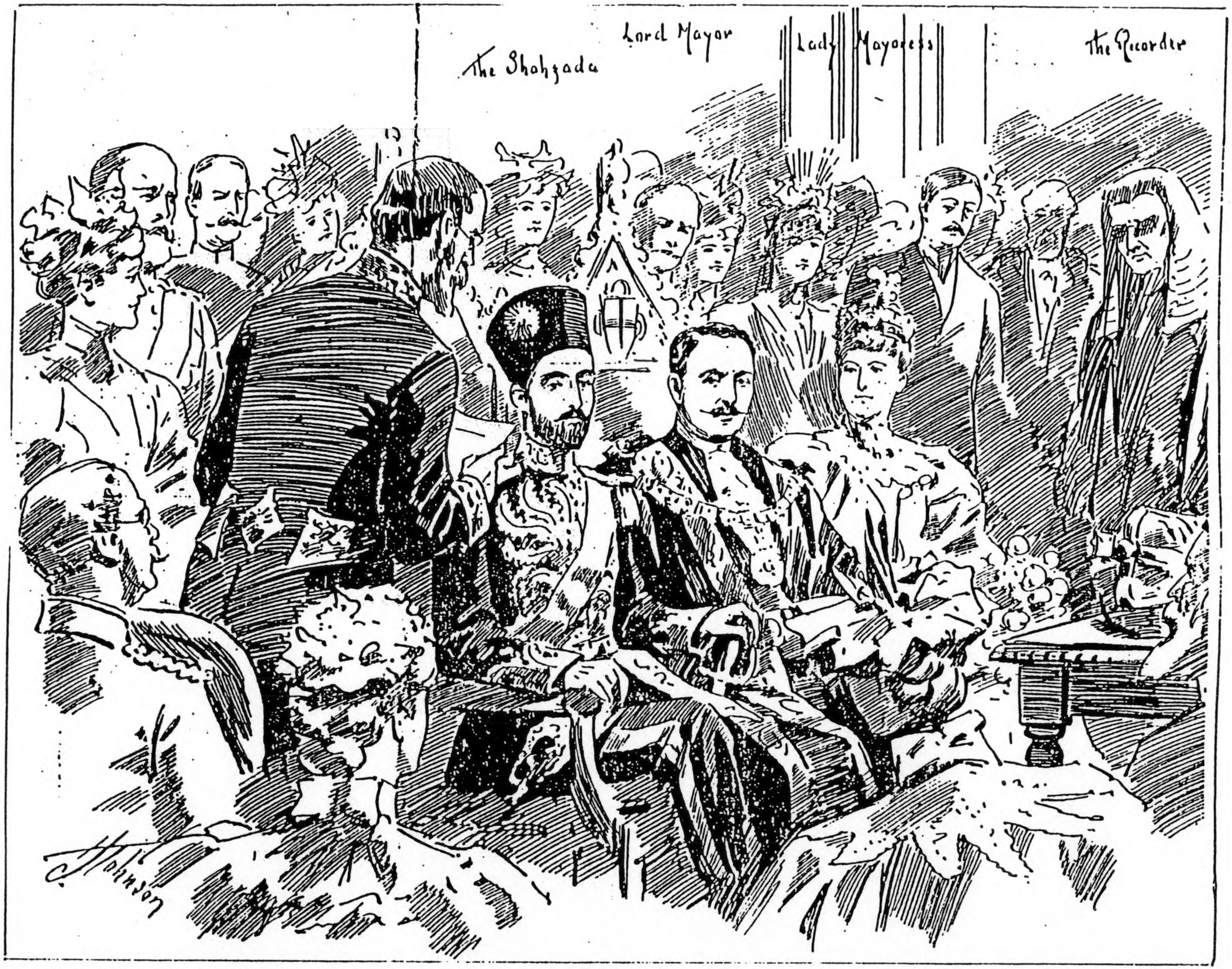
The Daily Graphic, June 1, 1895.

Buckingham Palace on May 30; a military tournament on June 1; and a review of troops of Aldershot on June 5.

On the occasion of his audience at Windsor castle, Nasrullah Khan was reported to have made a very favorable impression on Queen Victoria (1837-1901) with his "princely bearing and the well-chosen words he addressed to her." The Sardar and his suite were driven in royal carriages to the entrance of the castle, where they were received by the Duke of Connought, Prince Henry of Battenberg, Mr. Fowler, the secretary of state for India, and high court officials. The Afghan party was led to the Presence Chamber were the Queen was seated. The Duke of Connaught presented the Prince to the Queen who rose and extended her hand. After the greetings, the Shahzada was motioned to sit next to her Majesty. There were no reports that Nasrullah mentioned the subject of his mission. He merely thanked her Majesty for the uniform kindness and attention he had received from British officials in both India and England.

The Sardar and a retinue of about 100 persons went by special train to Woking where they were received by Dr. Leitner, the director, and the staff of the Oriental University Institute. A number of Turkish, Persian, and Indian diplomats and other dignitaries were assembled. The Shahzada and his party had lunch at the institute and then proceeded to the community mosque where he was presented with a photo-zincographed copy of the Koran. He donated £500 in the name of Amir Abdur Rahman to the mosque and the entire party participated in the holiday prayers. A special correspondent of the Globe contrasted the devotion of the assembled to the "Christian method of hurrying our religious exercises as a thing to be ashamed of." [13] He added "And what, think you, was the verdict of the Cockney crowd? That they were worshipping the sun! Fancy worshipping the sun in London." Those were the days of the "pea-soup" fog.

A high-point was the Sardar's visit to the Guildhall on June 6, where he was the guest of the City of London. He left Dorchester House in three state carriages, each drawn with four horses with outriders and an escort of the "Horse Guards Blue" followed by a half dozen "well-mounted" men of the Shahzada's bodyguard. It was a rare, brilliantly clear day and thousands waited at Trafalger Square and along the route to get a glimpse of the Afghan Prince. The entrance to the Guildhall was guarded by a detachment of artillery which the 800 invited guests passed to assemble in the library. The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress arrived punctually at 1:30 and took their stand on the dais. High dignitaries of the British-Indian service were present, Sir Lepel Griffin, the man who negotiated the recognition of



THE RECEPTION OF THE SHAHZADA AT THE GUILDHALL: COLONEL TALBOT INTERPRETING THE ADDRESS OF WELCOME FROM THE CORPORATION.

The Daily Graphic, June 7, 1895.

Amir Abdur Rahman after the second Anglo-Afghan war, was allowed to take his seat almost without recognition. [14]

Applause greeted the arrival of dignitaries and everyone was assembled when the Shahzada and his party arrived about 20 minutes late. The usual speeches were delivered, extolling the friendly relations between the two countries. The Chief Magistrate declared that Afghanistan's friendship was important because "Our vast Indian possessions form the most valued and highly-priced gem in our imperial crown, possessions which all loyal Englishmen are prepared to make any scrifices to retain." [15] Nasrullah Khan thanked his hosts for their hospitality. He said that for two reasons their mutual friendship is on the best possible footing: The misunderstandings which existed between the two governments had now been converted into friendship, and "the frontier between England and Afghanistan has been demarcated, so that neither party can transgress his own frontier, except in friendly interchange of visits." [16] Toasts (mineral water for the Afghans) were offered to "Her Majesty the Queen, Empress of India" and "His Highness the Ameer and his Highness the Shahzada." The City presented a gold casket to the Sardar containing its address of welcome. [17]

The attempt to impress the Afghan Prince did not seem very successful. A reporter somewhat chauvinistically remarked that no country "can boast such a centre of wealth and influence than the City of London. All the pageantry of the East is tinsel compared with the riches of the community who entertained the son of the Ameer." Nasrullah Khan witnessed a review at Aldershot which a reporter described as "a really noble and significant military spectacle whose impressiveness even the German Emperor would have admitted." [18] One correspondent boasted that "The City is, indeed, the very core and kernel of the British Empire, the centre from which our merchant adventurers of the past went out to conquer, by slow degrees, that vast India the possession of which has brought their descendants into contact with the ruler of distant Afghanistan." [19]

But one paper complained that "it is difficult to gather from his expression or bearing whether in his opinion it is we that honour him or he that honors us." [20] Another paper commented facetiously that it was "just barely possible that his Afghan Highness enjoyed his reception...; but if he did he succeeded in disguising his feeling in a way that a European might attempt to imitate but could never achieve." The Morning suspected that "with much of our European ceremonial, our visitor, frankly speaking, is bored," and observed that the Sardar and his suite took no part in the "eating and drinking, without in England no

ceremony of any importance is complete." [21] Clearly, there were reasons of dietary restrictions which prompted the Afghans to be cautious that they not be "exposed to an offer of 'Jambon d'York'" as one writer facetiously put it. [22]

Bored or just tired? The Chronicle warned the Sardar's entertainers "to be moderate in their arrangements for sight-seeing, for Orientals are easily bored. They are not accustomed to the pace at which Europeans, and especially, Englishmen, habitually live, and soon get tired with what we regard as pleasure." [23] One column, headed "Killing with Kindness" suggested that "Everyone is anxious to show kindness to the Ameer's son," and questioned whether it was "absolutely necessary that he should be dragged from one tiresome ceremony to another till he drops?" [24]

The press was generally enthusiastic and hospitable in its coverage of the Sardar's trip with the notable exception of The Morning Leader, a radical tabloid which exhibited a rather sarcastic tone in its reporting of the doings of the upper classes. It reported that the Shahzada was in no way impressed by the reception in the Guildhall, he "had endured several fanfares with stoicism" and took the Mayor's speech mildly, adding "A man has to be trained to appreciate Lord Mayor's speeches." It claimed that the Sardar was shocked when he first saw English ladies in evening dress and felt that he thought that "they ought to be clothed." [25]

One example of yellow press reporting was the publication of an obviously fake letter purported to be from a member of Nasrullah Khan's retinue. It was addressed to his Highness the Kharpet Bagghur (read "carpet- bagger?") from his son Boundha Khan. It was written on Thur-is-Dhai [Thursday June 6, of the reception] in a very convoluted style and talked about the "strange infidels [who] use their pockets only for carrying little squares of white cloth, with which they rub their noses." It described Dorchester House as a "second hand palace abounding with finger napkins called 'curtains' ... which these godless people hang all about their windows." And marveled about these curious people "whose Queen can do nothing until it has been discussed by 600 madmen, who are provided with a House for the purpose." It described the "great feast of forbidden flesh in our honour" which they ate with contaminated forks and knives instead of using their fingers. [26]

From June 8 to June 19, the Sardar traveled to the provinces, visiting Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, and Glasgow. Upon arrival in Birmingham in the evening of June 8 he was received by the Lord Mayor, members of the City Council, the Town Clerk and other dignitaries. The Afghan party was quartered in the Grand Hotel near the

railroad station and the next day the Sardar visited the Small Arms Factory, Kynoch's Ammunition Works, and a cotton mill. Then followed a luncheon and speeches at the town hall. Nasrullah Khan showed great interest in the manufacture of weapons and even purchased a number of military and sporting rifles. His interest in the manufacture of weapons caused him to upset the schedule of social arrangements and he was quoted as having said: "I have not come all the way from Cabul for a lunch. This is what I came to Birmingham to see." [27] One paper commented "The love of arms - of the actual weapons themselves - is one of the most distinctive characteristics of the Oriental." [28]

In Manchester the Shahzada asked to see the Lancashire cotton mill and observed the various stages of cotton spinning rather than visiting the Royal Exchange. Colonel Talbot, who accompanied the Sardar, acted as interpreter. In Liverpool the Sardar visited the generating station of the Electrical Overhead Railway and then the Liverpool Mosque and Muslim Institute where he attended services. The Shaikh fell on one knee and tried to kiss the hand of the Sardar, but Nasrullah was quoted to have said "Nay; it is for me to kiss the hand of the sheik - religion is before all dignities." [29] He gave a donation of £2,500 to the institute which was paid out on the spot in gold coin. He also announced that he would recommend to the Amir that some Afghan students should be sent to the institute. [30]

The Sardar's next stop was Glasgow were the press reported considerable disappointment by the public because of his refusal to adhere to the prearranged schedule. The excuse was that the Shahzada was fatigued and was performing his Friday prayers. Great preparations had been made for him to visit Coat's Thread Works which had been splendidly decorated for the occasion "while upwards to 7,000 young women employees had assembled in holiday attire .... Flags were flying from public buildings" and many of the dignitaries were assembled to receive the Prince. [31]

On his way to Newcastle and Leeds Nasrullah Khan visited Silloth and observed artillery practices on the big gun range of Armstrong, Mitchell, and Co. He witnessed the firing of quick-firing naval guns but seemed especially impressed by howitzers and small mountain battery guns. [32] In Newcastle the Prince witnessed the progressive stages of gun-making at Elswick and went on board of a torpedo-catcher and observed the firing of a torpedo. Wherever he went he was transported by special luxury trains, on several occasions by ship, and escorted by honor guards. A 21-gun salute and committees of the towns military and civil elite greeted the Sardar in every town and he politely reiterated

the Amir's desire for a strengthening of the alliance between Afghanistan and Britain. He devoted most of his time to see what he considered of interest for the development of Afghanistan, even at the cost of ceremonial duties. Under the heading "Great Disappointment in the City of Knives," one newspaper reported that Nasrullah was suffering from a "feverish attack" and abandoned his visit to Sheffield. He proceeded directly to London where he arrived on June 19.

The press was cordial and often enthusiastic in its reception of the Afghan Prince. [33] Apart from stereotyping when speaking of the "Oriental" mind - its supposed love for loud colors, limited attention span, love of arms, and quaint customs - the press was respectful with the notable exception of a correspondent of the New York Tribune who was outright insulting in his description of Nasrullah Khan and his party. [34] The "antiestablishmentarian" The Morning Leader was spoofing both the Afghan guests and their hosts, suggesting that the Prince must see the Crystal Palace, because "All semi-barbaric potentates" have to see it, as "There is something that awes them, and deepens the impression of the grandeur of England which these visits are designed to leave on the Oriental mind." The Porcupine claimed that "The Shahzada pooh-poohs the idea that English ladies are beautiful. He says the young ones are too thin, and their figures constitute an insuperable defect, while those who conform by their plumpness to his notion of beauty are invariably too old." [35] It followed up with a doggerel, which said among others

> ...the Shahzada has spoken a speech
> On the beauty of ladies in England: and each
> Of the ladies of England has heard it.
> And aggrieved by a verdict so stern,
> The Afghan Prince they despise and they spurn.

One Nathaniel Gubbins claimed having received by mistake a letter from Nasrullah Khan to his father which was written on paper "such as is used in this land for the wrapping-up of hardware." Since his knowledge of Persian was limited he "invoked the aid of a compounder of curries" and between them they were able to decipher the letter. [36] Like the letter previously cited this also was a fake.

One writer referred to the Prince's "page-in-waiting" as his pocket, because he carried all the "little trifles that an English gentleman usually carries in his pocket," but he added that "the post of pipe-bearer is a separate office."

An amiable encounter was reported between Colonel Muhammad Hasan Khan and Field Marshal Sir Donald Steward who met in battle during the second Afghan war. Upon being



The Fact that Herr Eduard Strauss's incomparable Waltz Band from the Imperial Institute and the Shahzada graced the State Ball in Buckingham Palace, on May 30, made that Court function exceptionally noteworthy. Flowers were there in abundance, and the *fine fleur* of the aristocracy looked its best. There were twenty-one dances in the programme. Of these, ten were waltzes. With Herr Eduard Strauss as wielder of the bâton, and the "Blue Danube" and "Doctrinen" waltzes to move the dancers, who could have resisted! Queen of the Ball, the Princess of Wales wore a dress of black satin with Brussels lace; head-dress, tiara of diamonds; ornaments, diamonds and Orders. Princesses Victoria and Maud of Wales wore gowns of pearl grey satin, veiled with embroidered chiffon; and corsages arranged with drapery of silver paillettes on mousseline de soie and pink roses; with ornaments of diamonds and pearls. Princess Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein wore a gown of white chiné silk, the bodice draped with rose-coloured chiffon; and ornaments of diamonds and pearls. The Ball gave pleasure to a large number of Court people.

THE SHAHZADA IS INTRODUCED TO THE BEAUTIES OF LONDON SOCIETY TO THE TUNE OF HERR STRAUSS'S WALTZ MUSIC.

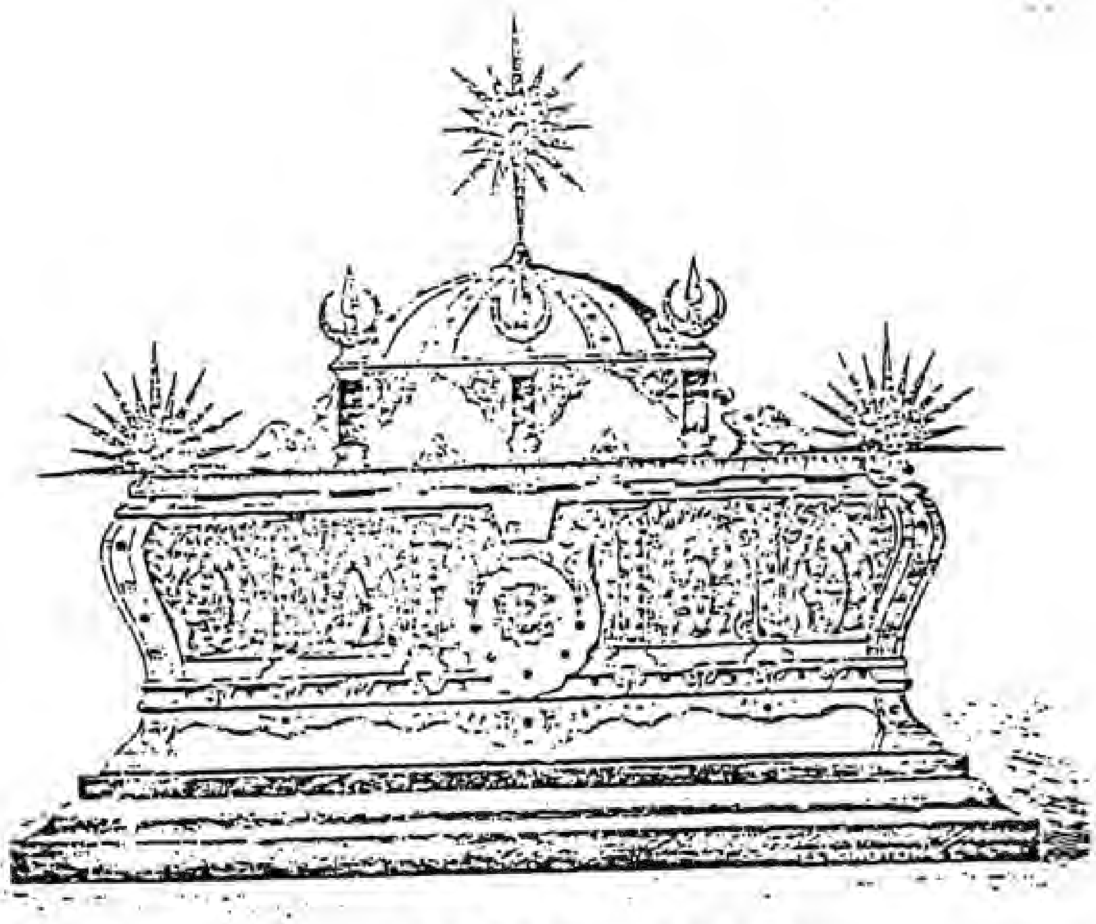
<u>The Penny Illustrated Paper</u>, June 8, 1895.

introduced, the Marshal said "with a merry twinkle in his eyes ... 'have we not met before?'" The Colonel replied laughingly "I did not see you on that occasion." On another occasion Muhammad Akram Khan was quoted to have said, "This is an old country - old houses, old Queen, old institutions."

The press interviewed Britishers who were members of the Shahzada's retinue or had resided in Afghanistan, all of whom later published books about their experiences. [37] Dr. John Alfred Gray, the Amir's physician, reported that he also kept busy painting portraits of the Amir and his sons. He described the Amir as "a man of presence ... fair-skinned ... his head is good and square, and his eyes are piercing; his manner is dignified and courteous; he can, however, if occasion arise, be very fierce." [38] Miss Lillias Hamilton, physician to the ladies of the harem, felt that much published about the Amir was crude and garbled, and described Abdur Rahman "as a man ... most charming and most kind." [39] Frank Martin claimed that Nasrullah's reception by the Queen "was an event so kindly dignified and graceful that it will never be effaced from his memory." He stated that the Shahzada informed the Amir of his every move by telegram written in Persian in roman characters and cabled to Peshawar where runners carry the dispatches "at the end of a stick slung across the shoulder," running in relays for three days. [40] He felt that any lingering doubt of the sincerity of the Amir's friendship should now be put to rest.

Back in London, the Shahzada took trips to visit Eton, school of the elite, and attended a gala ball with 3000 guests at the Imperial Institute where Herr Eduard Strauss played his newly composed "Shahzada March." [41] He traveled to Brighton and attended a session of the House of Lords. The Fishmonger's Company invited the Prince to dinner and he asked "Why should I dine with people who sell fish?" But when he was told that the Prince of Wales was a fishmonger the Sardar agreed to accept. One reporter hoped no one would tell the Shahzada that the English have been called a "nation of shopkeepers" or the Afghan Prince would go back to Afghanistan believing that the eldest son of the "Great Queen" was "a fishmonger in deed as well as in name."

On July 2, Nasrullah Khan paid his official visit to Queen Victoria. He presented to the Queen a letter from the Amir in a solid-gold casket emblazoned with lapis lazuli, surrounded with stars and crescents of purest diamonds, so arranged that they could be detached and worn as personal ornaments. Other presents "which Her Majesty ... was pleased to accept" included forty exquisit shawls, 800 astrachan skins, and four large rocks of lapis lazuli. The



CASKET PRESENTED BY THE SHAHZADA TO HER MAJESTY.



CASKET IN WHICH THE CITY'S ADDRESS TO THE SHAHZADA WAS ENCLOSED.

The Penny Illustrated Paper, June 15, 1895.

casket was crafted in London of 18 carat gold and was valued at £6,000. [42] The Afghan presents were valued at twenty thousand pounds. Presents from the Queen and the British government included two globes, one terrestrial and one celestial; a silver tea service, a chronometer watch and chain, a silver clock, a silver-gilt sabre and a gold mounted dressing case. Further a "state landau" with harness, a selection of sporting rifles and guns, four gold mounted photograph albums were supplied and such miracles of science as a microscope, a camera, and aneroid barometer, one field glass, and a chemical chest were provided. [43]

The Sardar was accorded a farewell audience on July 20 in which he presented a "small request" of his father, namely, "that there should be permanently appointed in London on behalf of His Highness the Amir, a trustworthy person who would always see with his own eyes and write accounts ... and would convey letters from His Highness the Amir..." [44] But the Queen said she would need to consult with her ministers and Nasrullah Khan waited until not grant request. Lord George Hamilton, the secretary of state for India, later replied that "owing to the greater proximity of the Government of India, the better local information at the disposal of the Viceroy, and the exalted position of Her Majesty's representative, the present procedure was the more convenient one." Subsequently the British Prime Minister Lord Salisbury sent a letter to the Amir stating that "the presence of a British officer at Kabul had on two occasions led to tragic events which are still remembered, and that until a British officer could with safety live at Kabul and travel in the country, it would be impossible to receive an Afghan envoy in England." [45]

The British government had several objectives in extending its invitation to Amir Abdur Rahman's son. It wanted to impress the Afghans with the wealth and military might of England and thus consolidate the alliance which was vital for the defense of India. It also hoped that Nasrullah's Khans visit to the chief industrial and manufacturing centers would lead to purchases for the development of a nascent industry in Afghanistan. One paper stated under the heading "Salaam Alekhem" [46] that "Our relations with Afghanistan constitute one of the keystones of our position in Asia. The warlike and indomitable races over whom the father of Nasrullah Khan rules with so conspicuous an intelligence and so admirable a manliness, hold the post of honour among the sentinels of our Indian frontier." [47]

Just prior to the Shahzada's arrival in England a book was published by Stephen Wheeler, entitled The Ameer Abdur

Rahman, and the British press quoted liberally from it. It told the story how Abdur Rahman, the son of Amir Muhammad Afzal Khan (1866-67) and grandson of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan (1826-38 and 1842-63), had attained power. He helped his father to gain the Kabul throne fighting Shir Ali (1863-79), another pretender, but in the continuing fratricidal war was forced to seek asylum in Samarkand, Bukhara, where he lived for the next ten years. British-India invaded Afghanistan in the second Anglo-Afghan war (1878-79), but was unable to consolidate her power. Realizing the possibility of a debacle similar to the first Anglo-Afghan war (1839-42) in which her entire army was annihilated; Britain recognized Abdur Rahman as "Amir of Kabul and its Dependencies" in 1880 in spite of the fact that he had entered Afghanistan with Russian support. The "Iron Amir" unified the country under his central rule and forced Lord Lytton, the viceroy of India, to abandon his policy of dismembering Afghanistan.

Wheeler quotes Sir West Ridgeway describing the Amir as a ruler of unusual ability and one of the few great men living, "a hard and cruel ruler who rules a hard and cruel people." [48] As the Daily Chronicle expressed it "Afghanistan is a country where the sovereign rules in reality as well as in name." [49] Another paper stated that "The Amir was called to the throne of Kabul after a most unfortunate and disastrous war. He took up the reins of power upon his own terms, and did not act in the slightest degree as a puppet of the Government of India." [50] It added that Sir Lepel Griffin, who was with Lord Roberts (commander of the Indian army) during the Afghan war, "was practically at his wits' end" to induce Abdur Rahman Khan to "occupy the guddi (throne) at the moment when we wanted him to do so." He finally agreed "on our knuckling down to every condition and restriction which we imposed." [51]

One writer suggested that "The Ameer is too sagacious a man to pretend that his friendship for England is based on sentimental preference," he relies on our alliance because it is to our common profit. [52]

Describing the Afghan ruler's policy, The Evening Telegraph told an apologue of Abdur Rahman who said, "A swan was swimming in a pond, watched with hungry eyes from one bank by a pack of hungry wolves and from the other by an old tigress," when he came close to a bank the tigress or wolves would try to catch him, therefore he "resolved to confine his movements to the middle." [53] The paper added, "This is the true foreign policy of Afghanistan, and it is a policy which we have no right to resent and no power to change." The policy of the government of India had therefore undergone a change, it accepted Afghanistan as a buffer and tried to strengthen it as a bulwark against

Russia. The Iron Amir did not permit Britain to peacefully penetrate his country under the egis of their common defense. The Evening Telegraph felt that "the Amir does not appear to be of a class of ruler to encourage the formation of a chartered company to develop Afghanistan." But it expressed the hope that if Englishmen were permitted to appear in Afghanistan and "knock about the country a bit, the hatred felt by the Afghans toward England would rapidly die away." [54]

There was no chance for this to happen. Having protected his northern frontier from Russian attack, Amir Abdur Rahman also kept his British "ally" at arms length. He did not permit the presence of an Englishman as envoy in Kabul, saying that he could not protect him from attack by one of his fanatical subjects, and resisted Indian offers of extending a railroad into Afghanistan to facilitate their common defenses. He felt there was no need for foreign troops or advisers and demanded only the weapons and ammunition he needed for his armed forces. Only individual Britishers were permitted to enter Afghanistan and their scope of activity was closely curtailed. [55]

Because of the importance of the alliance and the fact that the Amir was not in the best of health, there was speculation as to the possibility of civil war over succession. It was rumored that Nasrullah Khan would be appointed governor of Afghan Turkestan, an area of great strategic importance, while his brother Muhammad Umar Jan would be governor of Herat and Habibullah, the heir apparent, would remain in Kabul. George Curzon who had personally met the Amir was quoted as saying that the Afghan ruler was "generations ahead of his subjects ... [and the] least we can do is to extend some measure of confidence in the wisdom of his administrative appointments. [56]

Possibilities for conflict with Afghanistan still existed. The Indian government had just occupied Chitral and desired to keep open the road from Peshawar by Dir, areas that were hitherto independent and the Afghan ruler considered in his own sphere of influence. There were debates as to the wisdom of this "forward policy." It was part of the "Great Game" where Britain, in response to Russian moves into the Pamir, made its northernmost advance into territory no Englishman had yet seen. Umra Khan, the chief of Jandul, escaped from Afghan asylum and joined the attackers of the British expeditionary force. The question was whether Amir Abdur Rahman had permitted Umra Khan to escape. The war party in India won eventually and the area was incorporated into India as the Agency of Dir, Swat, and Chitral. One paper commented that in interfering with the independence of the tribes "We are repeating at Chitral the

blunders we committed at Cabul. [57] The South Wales Daily Star commented "To our Indian Empire, so long as the doctrine of buffer states and scientific frontiers is accepted, the attitude of Afghanistan will always be a source of constant anxiety." [58]

Sardar Nasrullah Khan left England on September 3, and after a visit to the European continent, he returned to Afghanistan in October 1895. Relations between Afghanistan and Britain deteriorated: Britain had not come to the support of Afghanistan when Russia annexed the Panjdeh Oasis in March 1895, the Indian government's forward policy in Chitral, and the Amir's support of the free tribes on the British side of the Durand Line continued to cause friction. When Amir Abdur Rahman died in 1901 (the same year Queen Victoria died) Britain did not recognize the succession of Habibullah Khan in the hope of winning a number of concession. Amir Habibullah refused and eventually the agreement of 1880 was renewed. Nasrullah Khan became viceroy (na'ib al-Saltana), he enjoyed the support of the Pashtun tribes, the clergy, and was a leading proponent of the "war party." Amir Habibullah remained neutral during the first World War in spite of promises of armed support from the Central Powers if he would attack India. His neutrality cost Habibullah his life in 1919 and Sardar Nasrullah became king for three days; by this time he had become an implacable foe of the British. He was deposed by his nephew Amanullah (1919-1929) who in the third Anglo-Afghan war (May - June 1919) won Afghan independence from Britain. Nasrullah Khan died in February 1919, shortly after his imprisonment by Amir Amanullah. [59]

NASRULLAH TRIP 1895

Itinerary

Arrived on "Clive" at Spithead,	5:00 p.m.	May 23
Land at Portsmouth		May 24
Arrived London	5:30 p.m.	May 24
Unofficial Reception with Queen		May 27
State Ball at Buckingham Palace		May 30
Royal Military Tournament		June 1
Beiram Festival at Mosque in Woking		June 4
Review of Troops at Aldershot		June 5
Reception, City of London Guildhall, Corporation of London		June 6
Reception, Dorchester House for Secretary of State for India Visit to Docks		June 7
Visit to Secretary of State for India		June 8
Travel		June 8 - 19
Birmingham	June 8	
Manchester	June 9-11	
Liverpool	June 13	
Glasgow	June 15	
Newcastle	June 17	
Leeds	June 18	
Newcastle-London	June 19	
Ascot Cup Day		June 20
Fishmongers' Company Dinner with Prime Warden		June 21
Dinner with G. N. (Lord) Curzon		June 26

Marleborough House Dinner with Prince of Wales	June 29
Queen's Reception Presentation of presents and Lunch with Queen	July 2
Attendance at the ball of the Imperial Institute Herr Strauss plays "Shahzada March."	July 3
Visit to the House of Lords	July 4
Visit to Greenwich Observatory	July 8
Second State Ball at Buckingham	July 15
Shahzada's Reception at Dorchester One thousand seven hundred Guests	July 18
Farewell Audience with Queen Presentation of Amir's Letter	July 20
Departure from London	Sept. 3

1. For the history of the Amir's relations with Britain, see Ludwig W. Adamec, Afghanistan, 1900-1923: a Diplomatic History, and Afghanistan's Foreign Affairs to the Mid-Twentieth Century.

2. Vartan Gregorian, The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan, 1969, p. 159.

3. A History of Afghanistan, Sir Percy Sykes, pp. 194-95

4. The Globe and Traveller, May 24, 1895.

5. The Lady's Newspaper & Court Chronicle, May 25, 1895.

6. British officers attached to the Sardar's suite were Sir John M'Neill, representing the Queen; Sir Gerald Fitzgerald, representing the India Office; Colonel Talbot, of the Indian Foreign Department - acting as interpreter; Captain Pollen, aide-de-camp to the Viceroy of India; Surgeon-Major A. W. Leahy, medical officer. With Nasrullah came his mother-in-law; Miss Hamilton, the lady medical officer at the Amir's court and her sister; Mr. T. A. Martin, the Amir's commercial agent; Col. Muhammad Akram Khan, his brother-in-law; Muhammad Hasan Khan, chief of staff; the Kotwal [intelligence officer] of Kabul; Mirza Abdur Rauf, physician; two mullas, several members of his household, a body guard of twenty cavalry and infantry, and forty native servants - altogether about eighty persons. The Times, London, May 25, 1895.

7. The Daily Chronicle, May 24, 1895.

8. The Globe and Traveller, London, May 25, 1895.

9. Ibid.

10. The Times, London, May 24, 1895.

11. The Evening Telegraph, Belfast, May 27, 1895

12. On May 24, 1895, Queen Victoria was 76 years old.

13. The Globe and Traveller, London, May 27, 1895.

14. The Daily Graphic, June 7, 1895.

15. Ibid., P. 89.

16. The Daily Chronicle, London, June 7, 1895.

17. The casket was described as "plain, not sparkling with jewels" but "simple and characteristic in feeling, and made of 18-carat gold. The design is Persian, with ornate pilasters, and the panels have a rendering of Eastern work on them" The city arms and motto and views of Dorchester House and the Guildhall were attached, as were two tablets with the initials of the Shahzada and the arms of Afghanistan. The casket was not ready for presentation at the Guildhall and was delivered later. The Penny Illustrated Paper, London, June 15, 1895.

18. The Birmingham Chronicle, Birmingham, June 15, 1895.

19. The Times, London, June 7, 1895.

20. Our London Letter, 57 Fleet Street, June 6, 1895.

21. The Morning, London, June 7, 1895.

22. The Globe and Traveller, London, May 27, 1895.

23. The Daily Chronicle, London, May 27, 1895.

24. The Globe and Traveller, London, May 27, 1895.

25. The Morning Leader, June 7, 1895.

26. Ibid.

27. The Graphic, London, June 15, 1985. Also The Court Journal, London, June 15, 1895 and The News of the World, London, June 16, 1895.

28. The Daily Graphic, London, June 12, 1895.

29. The News of the World, London, June 16, 1895.

30. The Morning Adab, London, June 6, 1895.

31. The Birmingham Post, Birmingham, June 15, 1895. Also The Daily Graphic, London, June 15, 1895.

32. The Times, London, June 17, 1895.

33. One journal ventured the uncomfortable thought that the applause greeting the Shahzada "has opened the eyes of some of our Royal Highnesses to the dubious character of that

frenetic cheering to which they are often treated themselves...." The Modern Society, London, June 29, 1895.

34. The New York Tribune, New York, June 15, 1895.

35. The Porcupine, London, June 15, 1895.

36. Inan of the World, London, June 26, 1895.

37. Dr. John Alfred Gray, My Residence at the Court of the Amir, London, 1901; Lillias Hamilton, A Vizier's Daughter: A Tale of the Hazara Wars, London, 1900; and Frank Martin, Under the Absolute Amir, London, 1907.

38. St. James Budget, London, July 12, 1895.

39. The Sun, London, July 4, 1895.

40. The Westminster Gazette, London, June 15, 1895.

41. The Court Journal, London, July 6, 1895. Also, The Daily Graphic, London, July 5; The Daily Telegram, London, July 4, 1895; and The Times, London, July 4, 1895.

42. The casket was 18 inches in length, 13 1/2 inches in width, and almost 15 inches in height. It was embellished with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and other precious stones, all of which "admirable specimens of brilliancy, purity of colour, and perfection of cutting." The main body was divided into panels composed of "delicate tracery of an Arabesque character, separated by pillars of lapis lazuli, the center panels containing the arms of Afghanistan." From the four top corners spring magnificent half stars, "containing upwards of 178 fully-cut brilliants in each." Ascending from the lid were six massive pillars of lapis lazuli surmounted by crescents, each of which composed of twenty-four large brilliants. From this sprang six jeweled arches crowned with the sixteen point diamond star of Afghanistan, having a diameter of 4 3/4 inches and composed of 168 finest quality brilliants, weighing from 1 1/2 carats to 3 carats each. The work was according to Afghan designs by a goldsmith in London. Pictured on the front page of The Queen, The Lady's Newspaper and Court Chronicle, London, July 6, 1895.

43. British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, L/P&S/18/A/107A. Sardar Nasrullah Khan subsequently presented the gold watch to Pir Sayyid Hasan Gailani, hereditary head of the Qaderia sufi fraternity, which is still in possession of the family today.

44. The British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, L/P&S/18/A/107A.

45. _Ibid_. Pp. 10 and 11. Also see _A History of Afghanistan_ by Sir Percy Sykes, Vol II, P. 194.

46. _The Daily Graphic_, London, May 25, 1895.

47. _Ibid._, P. 23.

48. _The Westminster Gazette_, London, May 24, 1895.

49. _The Daily Chronicle_, London, May 27, 1895.

50. _Ibid._

51. _Ibid._

52. _Ibid._

53. _The Evening Telegraph_, London, May 27, 1895.

54. _Ibid_.

55. See Adamec, 1967.

56. _The Daily Chronicle_, London, June 7, 1895.

57. _The Daily Chronicle_, London, June 7, 1895.

58. _The South Wales Daily Star_, June 11, 1895.

59. See Adamec, _op.cit._